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JAPAN'S NEW ORIENTATION

By Kiyoshi K. Kawakami

For the first time, not merely since 1930 as is commonly believed, but in the entire history of its constitutional government since 1890, Japan, on April 10, held a general election free from the usual surveillance exercised by the party in power through provincial governors and police chiefs.

This is the most significant aspect of the election -- more important than the much publicized voting by women and Communists and the lowering of voting age from the former 25 to 20.

Obviously, if the Central Government were to preserve its concentrated authority, liable to be abused at every election time, the widening of the voting base would be of little benefit. This has been repeatedly proved by the victory of the government party or parties at the polls. Only when the public sentiment was uncommonly roused by some governmental mismanagement too flagrant to be tolerated was the opposition able to turn the tables. And the outs, once in, played much the same game to entrench themselves in power.

Ostensibly, the centralized governmental system is still in force. Actually, it is already consigned to desuetude by the Shidehara Cabinet, under General MacArthur's tutelage. To legalize this de facto situation the new Constitution provides:

> "The chief executive officers of all local public entities, the members of their legislative assemblies, and such other local officials as may be determined by law shall be elected by direct popular vote within their several communities."

This provision insures as never before the establishment of a real local self-government without which no democratic state can be built upon an enduring foundation.

Under the old system, provincial governors and police chiefs were appointed by the Home Minister at Tokyo, and were in fact bureaucrats representing the Central Government. Although each province had an elected assembly, this was an advisory body to the governor rather than an independent legislature. Even municipal governments of cities and towns

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were in certain matters subject to the supervision of the governor.

The above-quoted provision in the new Constitution is meant to abolish this bureaucratic centralization, and to inaugurate a system of decentralization in conformity with deep-rooted popular desire.

II

Foreign critics of the new Constitution, beguiled by such glamorous provisions as the clipping of imperial powers, the outlawing of war and the political equality of the sexes and races, have paid scant attention to less romantic but more immediately useful provisions. The provision for local self-government belongs in this category. So does the following:

> "Each house of the Diet may conduct investigations in relation to national affairs and may compel the presence and testimony of witnesses and the production of records."

Evidently this is modeled upon the distinctive American practice of investigations by Congressional Committees, in which the opposition party is always represented and can, if it so desires, publish a critical minority report. One of the immediate uses to which this new constitutional measure will be put will be the exposure of corrupt practices at the polls. Japan has had laws designed to forestall such irregularities. They were in some respects stricter than corresponding American laws. But the officers -- local governors and police chiefs -- were usually lenient with candidates who were in the good books of the government and unduly severe with opposition candidates.

The consequence was that in many cases rampant corruption went unchallenged. Though the money involved was very small compared with the sums doled out by big bosses in America, the illicit traffic has been the curse of Japanese politics. The above provision will go a long way toward checking this evil. Rival parties may be expected to invoke its aid without stint.

III

The fact that there is no deep-seated ill-feeling toward the Emperor was emphasized by the recent election. This was twice forecast, with the reasons explained, by the writer in HUMAN EVENTS (September 19, 1945, and January 16, 1946).

The Communists, whose battle cry was "Down with the Emperor", returned to the Diet only five Representatives as against 141 Liberals, 93 Progressives, 92 Social Democrats, 14 Cooperatives, eight Independents and 39 representing other minor groups.

From Hirohito's acts and utterances since V-J Day it may reasonably be inferred that the new Constitution has been drafted with his full approval. Unquestionably he is happy to have his powers clearly delimited as is done in the Constitution, for he is thus freed from responsibility for the acts and policies of a government over which he enjoyed, under the old Constitution, only fictitious authority.

The new Constitution insures that the Cabinet shall be responsible to the Diet, not to the Emperor. Apparently, this is an innovation. Actually, the same situation existed even under the old Constitution, for few Cabinets could remain in power without the support of the Diet. The Emperor seldom attempted to keep in power a Cabinet opposed by the legislative majority.

Article 63 of the new Constitution has a singularly cumbersome provision which confers upon the Diet the power to designate the Prime Minister. It seems unfortunate that Japan is not adopting the simpler British system, authorizing the Crown to order the majority leader to assume the premiership.

In Japan, Cabinets are traditionally short-lived. They may be even more so during the uncertain years ahead. It would be both inconvenient and costly to convene the Diet so often just to nominate a new Prime Minister. Perhaps the framers of the Constitution envisaged a situation in which no single party is likely to enjoy a clear majority, which is the case as a result of the recent election.

IV

General MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces of Occupation in Japan, delivered a speech of considerable length before the Allied Council at Tokyo on April 3, devoting a full third of it to a commendation of the new constitutional provision whereby Japan forever renounces war "as a means of settling disputes with other nations". He said:

> "I therefore commend Japan's proposal for the renunciation of war to the thoughtful consideration of all of the peoples of the world. It points the way and the only way. The United Nations Organization, admirable as is its purpose,

great and noble as are its aims, can only survive to achieve that purpose and those aims if it accomplishes as to all nations just what Japan proposes unilaterally to accomplish through this Constitution -- abolish war as a sovereign right."

Perhaps Japan, in making the lofty pronouncement, is more realistic than idealistic. The country is completely disarmed. It will in this atomic age never be able to arm adequately, even if permitted by its conquerors to do so. Its only safe course is to remain disarmed. Even so, in the not entirely inconceivable event of another Pacific war between other nations, both belligerents might for purely strategic reasons seek to invade and occupy Japanese territory. Therefore, Japan, if, as and when admitted into the United Nations, will no doubt urge complete disarmament upon all nations, large and small.

In playing this role Japan must not be in the position of an enfant terrible, saying things only to embarrass the big Powers. It must be sincere in its advocacy of universal peace and disarmament and must advance its views with the ardor of a true reformer. Happily for the world, Japan, small, impoverished, impotent, can never again afford the luxury of imperialistic expansion.

The irony of fate and the force of circumstances may yet make Japan largely instrumental in consolidating the peace won by the Allies at the staggering cost of war -- a war into which Japan itself, with a lunatic expectation of German victory, plunged madly.

A chastened Japan proclaims in its new Constitution that: "We desire to occupy an honored place in an international society designed for and dedicated to the preservation of peace and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth", and that "laws of political morality are universal and obedience to such laws is incumbent upon all peoples who would sustain their own sovereignty and justify their sovereign relationship with other peoples".

From time immemorial light has come from the East. Will it again come from the East to infuse a new life into a war-weary world?

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. III - No. 18

By Frank C. Hanighen May 1, 1946

The world during the past week seemed to express itself in a vast global spasm, in its desire to throw off the regimentations of war. In America, the din of the revolt against OPA sounded in the halls of Congress. In Germany, persecuted Jews broke the bounds of a displaced persons camp in a mad, berserk riot. In two other diverse areas of the world, this impatience assumed novel political shapes.

(1) Korea -- even more than China, with its Nationalist-Communist struggle at a breaking point -- is seething with popular unrest. The Koreans want both Russian and American armies to leave their country at once and to allow an independent government to take over. The Russians insist on staying, and propose a joint Russo-American trusteeship. MacArthur, the great pacifist general, thoroughly agrees with the Koreans and backs them in their demand. In a strongly worded, but unpublicized cable to Washington this week, which set State and War Departments buzzing, he warns that the Koreans' demands must be granted -- and soon.

(2) Fed up with four years of American occupation, the inhabitants of Iceland showed that they wanted nothing resembling it; specifically, the granting of air bases to the United States. Premier Olafur Thors in a private letter to the State Department, intimated that he personally had no objection, but neither he nor any other politician who publicly advocated leasing bases could face the voters at the coming elections. The gentlemen in the War Department with polar projection maps above their desks are philosophically waiting until after the elections, as they ponder this lesson in political science.

Secretary Byrnes, wiser and more adept than six months ago, cannot be unmindful of this universal mood. There was more to his offer of a Four-Power, 25-year defense pact against Germany than meets the casual eye. By this clever stroke, Byrnes took the diplomatic offensive. He could hardly have expected acquiescence, but if Russia rejects the offer, the responsibility is Russia's. Meanwhile, his move was designed to attract France away from the Russian orbit.

But, the underlying strategy of Byrnes is based on the evacuation of all armies from Europe. He knows by now that no occupation army, no matter how well handled, promotes the processes of reconstruction. Whatever his diplomatic successes at Paris, his biggest problem will remain unsolved until all forces of occupation return home.

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Those Republicans who rejoice at evidences of disunity in Democratic ranks on Capitol Hill, the attacks of PAC-CIO elements on Southern Democrats, and the counterattacks of the latter particularly on Boss Hannegan, suffer from an overdose of wishful thinking, according to political observers. Southern Democrats, whatever they may do to Truman legislation, will always remain faithful to the party in elections. Mr. Hannegan was never so secure in his job. And such inter-party amenities as the Wallace demand for purge of Southern Democrats are in reality "good politics". They represent an appeal -- difficult to resist -- to Northern labor elements. And where is the Republican bid for this section of the voters?

No, say these observers, if the Republicans seek encouragement, let them look not to the South, but to New York State. There Governor Dewey has won wide appreciation for his régime. "He's been a good Governor", is a common and compelling observation. The most likely Democrat at present to challenge him in the gubernatorial race next fall is Senator James Mead. But political experts in New York assign him little chance of defeating Dewey. For one thing, he is not a strong, colorful personality. For another, he failed to get Farley's support in the last nomination race in 1942, and Farley seems cool towards

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him today. Mead may recognize these disadvantages and decline to run. In any case, Republican prospects in the Empire State appear bright.

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The departure of Earl Browder for Russia may herald a complete reversal of the Communist line in this country, with consequent effects on the Labor and Leftist political situations. Browder was sometimes called the "American Litvinoff" because the Comintern regarded him as the vehicle for conciliating American capitalism. He has continued to advocate his doctrine of "collaboration with capitalism" following his deposition from leadership of, and expulsion from, the American Communist Party last fall. The Party ever since has been fiercely pursuing its new line of "war on capitalism" with resultant convulsions within and without its ranks. All is not well in the Party, say close students of its affairs.

Whether or not Moscow reverses the line, Browder's trip indicates that the Soviet Government is uncertain about what course its American fifth column should pursue and is at least inclined to listen to Browder's side of the case.

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Some definite indication of the way the French people are moving -- whether to Left or Right -- will appear in the results of the May 5 referendum on the proposed new Constitution. The Constituent Assembly has passed, by a comparatively narrow margin, the draft of this document. Communists backed it. Socialists gave it reluctant support. The new Popular Republican Party, as well as the Rightist parties, opposed it. If the majority verdict, on May 5, is "yes", then the general election to be held June 5 will elect deputies to a regular National Assembly, which under the new Constitution will possess virtually unlimited power. If the verdict is "no", the election in June will be for delegates to another Constituent Assembly, which will have to start all over again in framing a Constitution.

Many of the French who oppose the new organic law place their hopes on a concentration of anti-Communist feeling, embracing voters of various parties, which would presumably express itself in a majority "no". They recall that this happened in the referendum of last October, when the Communist-backed proposal for a weak executive during the constitution-making period was decisively defeated; although the Communists in the elections for delegates, held simultaneously with the referendum, won the largest number of votes and delegates of all parties. This time, the referendum will be held a month before the elections. If the Communists suffer defeat in the referendum, they will lose prestige in the forthcoming election campaign. At least, so it is argued by one side.

But others believe that the Communists have strong factors on their side in the referendum: apathy among the people; confusion about details of the Constitution; and popular fear of the uncertainty which would result from further continuation of a merely provisional government.

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One of the most important, but highly secret, topics at the present British Empire Conference in London, vitally concerns the United States. Australia and New Zealand want military defense arrangements with the United States, similar to that already in effect for Canada. The Pacific Dominions have approached Washington on the matter, achieving no definite results. Therefore, at London they are pressing for a move on an imperial level. South Africa, less interested, reportedly will go along with their request. The attitudes of Canada and the United Kingdom are not known. Some British sources, recalling the cool reception accorded Churchill's proposal of an Anglo-American alliance, believe that what Australia and New Zealand propose is not the politic course. But all British circles agree that not only continued but increased military coöperation is desirable. Thus, the Dominions want the Combined Staffs to go on, and they particularly desire

standardization of munitions among all the Dominions, the United Kingdom and the United States. Many delays and complications arose during the war because there were different gauges, sizes and types of munitions.

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The financial community is impressed by the large cash payments which Russia has begun to make to the International Nickel Company for the rich Petsamo mine in Finland, a part of Russia's spoils of war. The U.S.S.R. made an agreement with the Canadian and British Governments, by which it promised to pay twenty million U.S. dollars, in equal semi-annual amounts, over a period of six years. The first two payments aggregating $3,333,400 were promptly made in 1945 and the third is now about to be remitted.

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The British Labor Government's decision to close down the hundred-year old Liverpool Cotton Exchange is attended by more than historical and retrospective comment. It spells the end of one of Britain's great free markets, and symbolizes the trend of the new Government away from free international trade and commerce towards the sort of barter and bulk purchase system which marked the once roundly condemned Schacht system. The Labor Government in the debates about the Liverpool closing, according to the London Economist, produced no evidence that the cotton industry will get its raw materials more cheaply under the new dispensation.

This revolutionary decision raises another pcint. British economists estimate that the Liverpool institution obtained for Britain about £1,000,000 in foreign exchange through commissions on freight, insurance and banking services. If bulk purchase does not bring cheaper raw materials, Britain will lose a substantial amount of foreign exchange, or another important item in its list of "invisibles".

These invisibles (See HUMAN EVENTS, April 19, 1944) have traditionally played an essential role in Britain's international balance of payments. Britain has traditionally imported more than it exported and the deficit balance has been met by the invisibles — revenue from overseas investments, from shipping, from insurance, and various services such as those performed at Liverpool. Socialist policies and attitudes of the Labor Government conflict with the maintenance of income from these invisibles. Thus, Treasury head Hugh Dalton not long ago scoffed when British holders of Japanese bonds demanded a settlement. The Financial Editor of the Sunday Times recently complained that the Government economic policies are handicapping revival of business in invisibles. Without these to balance the trade deficit, reduction in the British standard of living will be permanent.

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When the Catholic Bishops of Western Germany last week framed a pastoral letter severely condemning Allied occupation policies, the United States Military Government requested its withdrawal, and the Bishops acceded. The Protestant churches made public a similar, although less drastically phrased, document. The Catholic letter criticized the "revolting proceedings" of the mass expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe, likened the denazification program to a "nightmare" and charged that "hundreds of thousands, if not millions" of German war prisoners were being forced to perform slave labor.

The Catholic letter was read in churches in the British zone, and a British Military Government spokesman was quoted as saying "it is impossible to interfere with the liberty of the church". This places the incident on a civil liberties basis. The German Catholic Bishops apparently recognize the issue and intend to stand on their rights. They have stated that they withdrew the letter "without pressure or threats" from the military authorities, and are now drafting a reportedly more detailed letter to the Allied Control Council protesting its policies. The UP dispatch describing the situation says, "The Bishops pointed out to the Army that they spoke the truth under the Nazis at great personal risk and would continue to do so."

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Notes and Quotes

A delicious Anglo-German exchange of remarks at a football game in the British zone of occupied Germany is reported in the London New Statesman and Nation. "An elderly professor, who had doubtless been teaching about lebensraum a year ago, bubbled to a little cockney, who looked rather like a sparrow. 'Do you realize what this means for Düsseldorf? We have beaten you at your national game' . . . 'That's all right', said the cockney, 'we've already beaten you at yours'."

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Recent testimony in Nuremburg brought confirmation of the German Resistance story first told in detail in HUMAN EVENTS, February 27 and April 3. One of the defense witnesses last week was Mr. Hans Bernd Gisevius, a member of the anti-Hitler conspiracy, who used his position in the Gestapo to undermine the Nazi régime. For two years, Mr. Gisevius acted as an intermediary between the Gördeler group and Mr. Allen Dulles, hea[d] of the Office of Strategic Services in Switzerland. Mr. Gisevius, who testified that [S]chacht had given valuable aid to the conspirators, emphasized that he had acted as a German patriot and upon orders from the leaders of the anti-Hitler plot. His book on the Underground, which recently appeared in Switzerland, will be published in the United States in an English translation. In addition, two American authorities on the subject are known to be preparing books on the German Resistance movement.

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The United States has agreed to grant the Polish Government a loan of $90,000,000. In return, Poland promises -- among other things — to hold a free and unfettered election, in accordance with our ideas of democracy. This sort of quid pro quo stands in contrast to the dictum uttered by President Roosevelt on June 23, 1944, when he said: "American foreign policy is not for sale."

Like other dicta of the late President, the sentiment appears more rhetorical than noble, on examination of the circumstances which inspired it. On June 15, 1944, at a time when her leaders were trying to stave off defeat and partition at the hands of Russia, Finland paid the installment on her debt to the United States. The next day, the State Department, moving towards a rupture of relations with Finland, unceremoniously ordered the expulsion of Finnish Minister Hjalmar Procope, and placed him under police guard. A few murmurs rose from the press at this unusual action. It was then that President Roosevelt gave his interpretation of the episode: "American foreign policy is not for sale."

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Senator Ball (Minn.) in an address at Syracuse University offered some interesting thoughts: "Liberals cannot overlook the dangers which still exist in the extreme political right, the chief of which is economic monopoly. But let's also face the fact that the great threat to freedom today is not from the political right, but from the extreme political left. Communists and Fascists are alike in their devotion to the proposition that the 'end justifies the means'. On that basis, they justify lies, cheating, murder, concentration camps and secret police as necessary steps on the road to a rosy Utopia which always seems to be in the distant future. To a liberal, on the other hand, the means are as important as the end. . . . Conservatives in the past have too frequently cried 'Communist' simply to defeat liberal proposals, and consequently many people refuse to believe there is really a wolf this time. . . . You will never find a liberal according to my definition talking about the 'masses' or the 'common man', or even 'the average man'. To my kind of liberal, every individual is very uncommon. He is a human being with a soul, not merely a complex assembly of appetites and fears."

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